

BIRTH

DRAWER 3- BIRTH-KENTUCKY

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# Abraham Lincoln before 1860

## Birth

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



# The World When

**Steam, Wipe In Its Infancy, Electricity Only a Scientific Curiosity—Darwin Born the Same Day**

**T**HIS world of 1809 was somewhat different from that of 1909. In many lines of human endeavor it is doubtful if all the previous centuries saw as great changes as have taken place in that single century. The age of steam was then in its earliest infancy. Watt had watched his teakettle and invented his engine. It is true; Fulton had made his steamboat traverse the Hudson and was in that very year, 1809, taking out his patent, but George Stephenson was then a laborer and was only dreaming of his locomotive, which was not to materialize until five years later. Thus, while the use of steam as a motive power was barely known, the marvelous revolution to be wrought by it had not yet started.

As for electricity, it was only a scientific curiosity. As far as any practical employment of it was concerned, that did not come till years later. In 1800 water and horse-dash were the chief motor powers; boats, wagons and stagecoaches were the almost exclusive methods of travel; candles and tallow dips were used as illuminants; there were but few newspapers, and these small and poorly printed, and letters were infrequent, voluminous and cost much for postage. Only a small percentage of the population was educated, dueling was in vogue, slavery was in existence on both sides of the ocean, there was little democracy or liberty anywhere except in America, and about the only things that were as they are now were love, death and taxes. Yet that was only a hundred years ago, barely a lifetime for some people. Truly, the world moves. It took it a long time to get into the habit, but it is "going some" now.

In 1800 about all the world that was known were Europe, a fringe of land

in Asia and Africa around the Middle-  
ranean's Highlander fringe down  
the eastern coast of the two Americas  
and a rather vague and grotesque notion  
in the public mind concerning  
China, India, Japan and the African  
continent. The chief use of Asia in  
those days was as a basis for fables,  
while Africa was only good for steal-  
ing "diamonds" from and selling them  
as slaves.

1. The first thing I noticed was that  
 the weather was very different from  
 what I had expected. It was much  
 warmer than I had anticipated.  
 2. The second thing I noticed was that  
 the people were very friendly and  
 helpful. They were very kind to  
 me and made me feel welcome.  
 3. The third thing I noticed was that  
 the food was very good. It was  
 very delicious and I enjoyed it  
 very much.  
 4. The fourth thing I noticed was that  
 the scenery was very beautiful. It  
 was very nice and I enjoyed it  
 very much.  
 5. The fifth thing I noticed was that  
 the people were very interesting. They  
 were very different from the people  
 I had known before.  
 6. The sixth thing I noticed was that  
 the culture was very different. It  
 was very interesting and I enjoyed  
 it very much.  
 7. The seventh thing I noticed was that  
 the language was very different. It  
 was very hard to hear and I  
 didn't understand it very well.  
 8. The eighth thing I noticed was that  
 the customs were very different. They  
 were very strange to me and I  
 didn't understand them very well.  
 9. The ninth thing I noticed was that  
 the people were very different. They  
 were very different from the people  
 I had known before.  
 10. The tenth thing I noticed was that  
 the weather was very different. It  
 was very different from what I  
 had expected.

# Lincoln Was Born

By James A. Edgerton

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light, a sail ship with a Lusitania or  
an ancient stagecoach with a modern  
locomotive.

Politically the showing is almost as bad for "the good old times." England was at about her lowest ebb of despotism. Napoleon had snuffed out the liberty gained by the French revolution. Most of the rest of Europe had but traded the rule of the kings for the personal military rule of this one man. In America alone were liberty and democracy recognised. They had no home elsewhere.

Spiritually the world was emerging out of the semi-atheism of the eighteenth century into the revived dogmatism of the nineteenth. No; looked at from any possible standpoint 1904 is just about a million miles ahead of the corresponding year in the preceding century. And that is not mere boasting. It is history.

For all that, 1800 was a noteworthy year—noteworthy for its promise rather than its performance. During it were born two of the great poets of the last century, Edgar A. Poe and Alfred Tennyson. And on Feb. 12, 1809, the very day that Lincoln was born, Charles Robert Darwin saw the light. Lincoln and Darwin! Where could be found two mightier names in their respective spheres—Lincoln, who freed the bodies of men, and Darwin, who freed their minds; Lincoln, who taught us that the black man is our brother, and Darwin, who taught us that the ape is our great-grandfather; both men majestic in their patient, homely simplicity; both earning the right of earthly immortality by their unexampled services to the human race; Darwin, the founder of evolution, who has revolutionized the thought of the world; Lincoln, the liberator of the negro, the preserver of the republic, the incarnation of democracy, who has shown the world what

the full statured American will be  
For the sake of these two Feb. 12  
1899, should be a far shining day.

In this same year occurred a notable death. Thomas Paine, the apostle of liberty in America, England and France, the real author of the Declaration of Independence, one of the founders of the French revolution and almost one of its martyrs, died in 1804, friendless and alone, in the country he had helped to liberate. Paine tried to free mankind spiritually as well as politically and thus gained the enmity of those who loved either kind of chains, which means practically everybody. But the day's coming was not far distant when the world will place him as high as it can among its heroes.

The writings of Paine had a great influence on Lincoln both in religion and politics. In his younger days Lincoln wrote a book upholding the ideas of the "Age of Reason" and intended to have it published, but some persons friend snatched it from his hands and gave it to the flames. But the thought could not be burned, and Haradon and all the other

acquaintance of the martyr president who knew him well and that he did not materially change his views till the day of his death.

It was in the political domain, however, where Paine influenced Lincoln most profoundly. As one was the author of the Declaration of Independence, so the other became its defender and apostle. One of the greatest pieces of eloquence that ever fell from the emancipator's lips was in support of this charter of the rights of man.

Indeed, both Jefferson and Lincoln were pupils of Paine, whom the world will some day recognize as the founder of modern democracy. Jefferson sullied his work by trying to steal the honor due his teacher. Lincoln was the truer and more honorable soul and practiced the teachings of the new political gospel with more fidelity.

When Lincoln was born Faine was about to take his deathbed and Jefferson in three weeks would relinquish the presidency. In Europe Napoleon had reached his zenith and in a few years would begin his downfall. The steam engine was invented, and the steamboat was launched, but nobody knew what either meant. The world had not awakened to modern progress, but was stirring in its sleep.

The particular corner of the earth in which Lincoln saw the light was almost virgin wilderness. Kentucky at that time was not only frontier, but raw frontier at that. It was nature unmodified and unadorned. It was good fundamental stuff out of which to make a man, provided the man was fundamental enough and strong enough to build himself out of such material. It takes a bright soul to shine out through a casing of such environment and such heredity.

But there has been a vast amount of unintentional running down of Lincoln's surroundings. His parents, relatives, neighbors, education, associates, and even his wife have come in for a share of the indirect abuse. This course is both unnecessary and unjust. Lincoln does not need to have his circumstances or his people minimized in order that he may seem great. Probably they do not show well by the contrast, but that is not their fault. They were fully as good as the average circumstances and people of that time. The ordinary hill may look very insignificant beside a mountain, but the hill cannot help that.

The Lincolns were poor, but so was everybody else. Equality is a heaven which leaves poverty not one-half so bitter. Lincoln was born in a log house with one room and a dirt floor, but so was almost everybody else who first saw light on the Kentucky frontier of that day. Ida Tarbell indignantly denies that Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, was the lazy loafer he has been pictured, and as that is the more charitable view and as Miss Tarbell is a woman I am going to side with her. Miss Tarbell also takes up the charge that Lincoln was a drunkard, and as there are two women in this case I side with her more than ever. Moreover, a fair investigation shows that the charitable view is the right one. Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln were an honorable, self respecting and industrious couple fully up to the average or above the average of the time in which they lived.



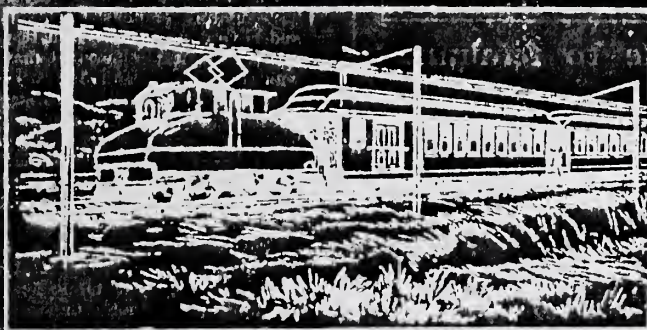
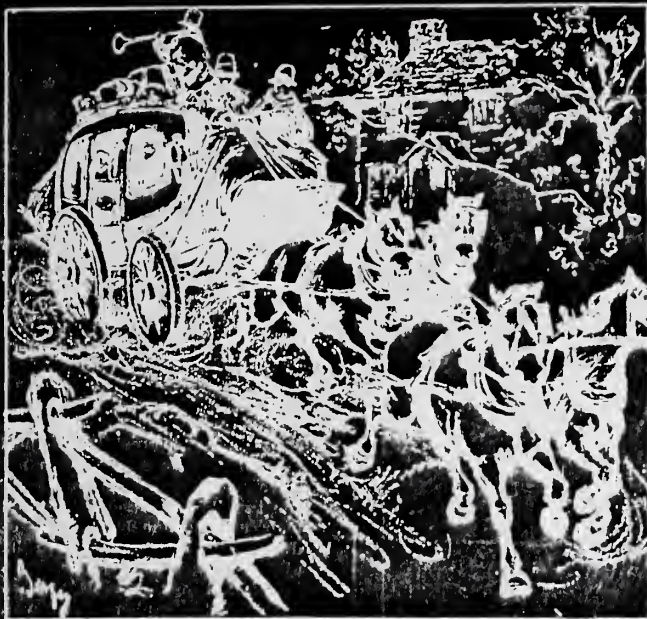
The same thing applies to Lincoln's environment. It was not bad; it was only crude. All these things are comparative. Besides, there is a whole lot of unnecessary fuss made about the early accidents that surround great men. An acorn will grow an oak if the soil is anywhere near to being half decent in which it is dropped. One of the immortals cannot be explained by the presence or absence of plush carpet on the floor of the bedroom in which he is born. Neither bank credits nor their effects can make or seriously mar a real genius who inherits their command. Poverty could not overwhelm Lincoln any more than wealth could spoil Roosevelt.

The worst that can be said of the Kentucky of Lincoln's day is that it was new, but it was also wholesome. As for the hard life, the simple fare, the primitive surroundings, what worth while man was ever retarded by things such as these?

Man is not a slave of things. He is in the image of the Maker of things; therefore he is a ruler of things by divine right.

All of Abraham Lincoln's life was a proof of this principle. By the sheer greatness of his heart, his intellect and his soul he overcame an adverse environment. He had few of the helps that are regarded as essential by most men. He was without the assistance of family or wealth, early training or influential connections, the prepared steps of the stairway to success. He had to climb the heights alone.

Mr. Lincoln said and did many great things, but was greater than anything he said or did. He was in the forefront of one of earth's fiercest struggles and yet is known chiefly as an exponent of liberty, brotherhood and peace. He was the largest figure in one of the crises in the world's history and yet lent more luster to his epoch than he gained from it. Lincoln will be a live figure in the minds of men when the occasion that gave him prominence shall have grown vague and distant. The event that brings a great soul into men's view is at best but the stage setting; he is the actor. It is but the background of the picture, he the chief figure and reason of the painting's existence. It is but the pedestal; he is the statue. Who remembers that Socrates fought in a war or that Buddha was heir to a kingdom? Alexander did not derive his importance from Macedon nor Cicero from Catiline. It was great for Lincoln to free the slave and save the Union, but greater to be Lincoln.



1809 1909



# New Story of Lincoln's Birth

## Grandson of Neighbors of Thomas and Nancy Tells His Grandmother's Account of President's First Days.

"From the lips of my grandmother, who was present when Abraham Lincoln was born, I have heard the thrilling story of those days, back in old Kentucky, preceding and following the great Lincoln's birthday," said Colonel Joseph Allen Todd.\* That speaker was of the blood of those old pioneers, who with Boone and his companions fled westward before the onrush of civilization and settled communities, born and bred on the frontiers of Nebraska of parents who were close neighbors and friends of the great American.

"It was always my grandmother's custom during the long winter months to tell us stories of those early days back in Kentucky, ere my grandfather, with that same restless blood that could not brook the repression of settled communities, had migrated West, following those trail-blazers just ahead of him, prompted by the same lure of the wild and untamed that made Abraham Lincoln's father a frequent wanderer from his home. My father was born during one of those long absences from home of the ever restless Thomas Lincoln.

"Thomas had gone with other trappers to the north, leaving his young wife with her brother John to do the rough work about their little cabin in that still wild country. John had been lured away by a band of trappers, and so she had come over through the forest to my grandfather's cabin. During her stay there she was constantly brooding as she worked over the mysterious little garments, and not until John came and she could go to her own cabin could she seem to throw off the gloom that had settled down upon her as the weeks lengthened into months since Thomas had left.

### Would Return at Sugar Time.

"Grandfather took over a hollow chunk containing a quantity of hard wood coals on the lizzard, with some vegetables and venison hams, enough to supply Nancy until sugar boiling time. She took up her simple life, patiently biding the time when the sap in the maple trees should be ready to flow. That was the signal promised by the wanderer as the time when he would return.

"Your grandpa went out one morning," grandmother went on, "when the woods were flooded with sunshine, with his axe and gourds. He tapped one or two cups in their trunks and placed the gourds so they could catch the sweet juice as it trickled down from the fresh wound.

"The following day the sugaring was fairly under way. We knew this would bring Thomas Lincoln home to Nancy.

"When it would get too dark to find the gourds that were filling slow-

ly with the musical drip, drip of the flowing sap, a huge fire was built close to where we were sugaring.

### Thomas Returns From Hunting.

"It was so dark that we could not see anything further from us than the blazing bonfire cast its flaring light. Pretty soon there was another halloo. Grandfather guessed at once that it was Thomas Lincoln. Sure enough it was Thomas and his party, and we could see them picking their way among the dark stumps of the waning firelight. They had left most of their furs, skins and pelts along with the troughs of bear oil at the winter camp, to be brought down after the sugar making was over.

"Thomas was very anxious about Nancy's situation, and when we told him, in his eagerness to see her, he refused to remain with us for the night. Leaving the pack, he girded up his belt and pushed on amidst the dark forest, carrying a rich pine torch to enable him to keep the trail. The rest of the winter spoil hunters pitched their camp around the big fire, and cooked their supper on the coals.

"Thomas came over in the morning and handed me, bashfully, a letter from Nancy, and carried off the pelts and skins. One night shortly after that we were awakened by the loud barking of the dogs. Grandpa jumped up and taking his gun opened the door and looked out. Far up the hillside came the rapid hoofbeats, as if some one were riding furiously off into the clearing, down the blazed trail.

"You'd better get ready," said Grandpa, stepping back and replacing the rifle. "Thomas is coming after you for Nancy, I guess!"

"In a few moments the midnight rider appeared, his horse leaping stumps, jumping logs, as he raced madly toward the house.

"Hello there! Is anybody awake?" I heard him cry. "Nancy wants her to come right over."

"All right, Thomas," I heard Grandpa say, "Cynthia is getting ready. You'll have to pilot her over, for I've got to stay with the kids. It's mighty black in the woods tonight. Do you think you can find your way back? Don't go tearing back as if the Shawnees were after you. Look at your horse pant!"

### Trip Through the Forest.

"In a few moments I was dressed and mounted on my nag, my baby on my lap. Thomas rode ahead, leading my nag and picking his way through the clearing, over logs, around stumps and trees, until we came to the black wall that reared up on the far edge of the clearing. We pushed

1921  
into the black abyss. Thomas urged the horses forward, trusting to their instinct of trained sight to take us along the invisible trail, so engulfed in the darkest gloom.

"Just as the gray day began to dawn we came into the clearing leading to the cabin. Thomas led the nags away as I caught hold of the latch string and listened. A great bed of coals burning on the hearth flooded the room with a ruddy glow. Stepping toward the fire with the baby bundled up, I heard a faint moan at the farther end of the room; then a low voice greeted me.

"I'm awful glad you have come. I've been so afraid you could not find your way, the night was so dreadfully dark, but I prayed so earnestly. I asked God to watch over you and shield you from all harm."

"I went over to her bedside and put Joseph down beside her."

"I wonder what the reason is Mrs. Carson doesn't get here. Is daylight breaking? Where is Thomas?"

"Now, look here," I said, "don't you go and get anxious about Thomas. He will be coming in after a while. I think he has gone up into the timber."

### Father Out Chopping Wood.

"I could hear the ringing ax from where he was making rails. With furious blows, like many a man before him, shrinking with a fear that makes cowards of the boldest to escape that event which women face with such heroism.

"The sun was streaming over the tall treetops, cresting the rocky ridge just east of the clearing when I opened the door and called Thomas to breakfast. He came striding down through the timber with his ax on his shoulder, stopping to cut an armful of wood, and casting uneasy glances toward the cabin door. He walked with a sheepish air looking toward the dark corner shyly. Then he began to fuss with the fire.

"Is everything all right?" he finally stammered.

"Yes, everything is all right. What did you sneak off in the woods for? Go over there to Nancy. She wants you. If I was her, though, I wouldn't let you come near me."

"He grinned and went to the bedside. She pulled him down, whispering something in his ear, then took his face between her hands with a look just so heavenlike in her eyes, and kissed him so tenderly and affectionately.

### Boy a "Bouncer."

"Now I will let you see it," she said, teasingly, "if you'll promise you won't go away again, anyway for a long time. See here, Thomas, see what God has given us." She turned down the cover slowly until he caught sight of a funny little head with a trace of brown hair. Then a weazened red face appeared close against her white bosom, and two chubby fists were thrust in view.

"Well, well, he's a bouncer," exclaimed the delighted father. "I wish I had a pair of steelyards to weigh the little codger with."

"Now, Thomas," I said, "I want you to lift him."

"What, me hold him! I'm afraid. It's such an awfully little thing, I might hurt it."

"You must get used to it, Thomas," said Nancy, smiling at his

timidity. "You're a daddy now, and must not shirk your duty."

"I picked up the little bundle and held it to him. He took it awkwardly and began to fumble it. It caused Nancy to laugh.

"My, Daddy, you're as clumsy as a bear."

"Well I'm not used to it. Then, you see I've never had any practice." He walked to the door, partly ajar, where a ray of sun was shining into the room. He looked at its red, crinkled face a while, then came and handed it to me, his face radiant.

"Well, he's a perfect stunner. What will we call the little shaver?"

#### Named After Grandfather.

"You are to give him the name," she replied. "If a girl, I'd call her Jane, after my mother; but as it's a boy, you are to name it."

"Then I will call him Abram, after my father, whom I can hardly remember, but Cynthia does, though. She recollects when he was killed by the Shawnees. I was but a small boy—just large enough to follow after him.

"Yes, Thomas," I said, "I recall the mournful event. Your mother never recovered from the shock.

"Sit down here, Thomas," Nancy continued. "Give up your restless wandering and settle down for our sake,

won't you?" Reaching up, she twined her arms about his neck and drew his head until it rested against the little red one lying so quiet on her bosom. "Now promise me. It's so lonesome without you."

#### "Scout of Civilization."

"I had been stirring round the hearth, where a bright fire was crackling, putting things in order about the room, all the time I was listening to Nancy's pathetic appeal. I knew how she had suffered in silence the torture of her lonely existence when the lure of the forest tore him from her side. Thomas had haunted its glades since he was old enough to hold a rifle. I knew the loneliness still in store for Nancy, for Thomas belonged to another class. He was one of the scouts of civilization, not the kind to become a plodding husbandman.

"Come, now, Thomas," I said, "promise me you'll bring Nancy and the boy to us before you go away again, to remain until you become good and tired of the wild creatures and are hungry for a sight of them again and some of Nancy's corn pone and venison and bacon."

"Oh, I'm not going away again," he spoke quickly, glancing down at Nancy.

Just then Mrs. Carson, the nurse, rode up. Thomas hurried out to help her dismount. She came hobbling in, all out of breath, from a furious ride. On John's arrival at Carson's with the news she had yelled to Carson to mind the brats, pulled John off his nag, crawled clumsily to its back and dashed off through the clearing and down the trail, pell mell through the timber, fearing she would be too late. It had been like many another race she had run along that trail between sparsely settled homes to become sponsor for the newly arrived babe.

"She came puffing in, and going up to the bed she took the little bundle up. "It's a fine boy, Nancy, the very image of his father. It's proud you should be of your first, Nancy.

"I called for my nag and started back over the trail. Cantering up the slope we had come down in that dark morning, I soon gained the crest of Huckleberry Ridge, from where I could see the quiet valley spread out so peacefully before me. The great dark forest was encircling it. I could see the brown ricks of fodder standing among the multitude of black stumps and caught glimpses of our cabins as they stood clustered alone together in the field. As I gazed down the wide woodland that marked the boundary of our diminutive world and counted the toil and labor it had required to bring it to its present state of cultivation, I thought of the new lands where Boone had gone and wondered how long before the love of wild adventure so strong in these men of the forest would break forth again in your grandfather and Thomas Lincoln."

"Grandmother did not know then that she had been present at the birth of one who in after years would become the saviour of his country. But she had. It was from such scenes the timber of those sterling days of pioneer life were hewn."

\*Col. Todd is a Chicago broker with whom the writer of this story worked in the preparation of a book on life in Kentucky a century ago. Though the book was never published, this account of Lincoln's birth was written from Col. Todd's material.



# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN LORE

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Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

### THE NATIVITY

Each year the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth invites the nation to pause and review again the achievements of its most illustrious son. While the events in his career which contributed to his greatness will be rehearsed in every school house in the land many will meditate upon his humble origin and the hardships of pioneer folk.

It is doubtful if any phase of Lincoln history has been more grossly misrepresented than the surroundings which welcomed the infant into the world. In fact it has been the general opinion of the reading public, based on the literature which has come into its hands, that the origin of Lincoln was comparable to the nativity scene at Bethlehem.

Careful investigations made, in recent years, throw a much different light on the actual conditions existing in the cabin home of the Lincolns on February 12, 1809. The wretched poverty of the Lincoln family has existed only in the minds of the authors who have vied with each other in giving to Lincoln a very unlovely introduction into the world.

It is true that his parents were poor but no worse off than their neighbors. It is true that Lincoln was born in a log cabin, but so were all the children of the pioneers. It is true that his parents were unschooled, but that was the condition of the great majority of their contemporaries who had grown up in a country that offered few educational privileges.

If we are to think of the nativity of Abraham Lincoln in its true perspective, we must place ourselves in the atmosphere of that day and tune and appraise his surroundings in the light of pioneer days.

Two parallel columns are submitted here which visualize the traditional and the documentary nativity of Abraham Lincoln.

### Traditional Citations

"The whole house squalid, cheerless, and utterly void of elevating inspiration."

"Here was the home and here were the occupants, all humble, all miserably poor."

"It is well nigh impossible to exaggerate the adverse conditions which surrounded him."

"The boy spent the most susceptible years of his life under no discipline, but that of degrading poverty."

"Reared in gripping, grinding, pinching penury and pallid poverty, amid the most squalid destitution possible to conceive."

"Lincoln was born in a degradation very far below respectable poverty in the state of Kentucky and lived in that poverty all his life."

"In the midst of the most unpromising circumstances that ever witnessed the advent of a boy into the world, Abraham Lincoln was born on the twelfth of February 1809."

"The domestic surroundings under which the babe came into life were wretched in the extreme... Rough, coarse, low, ignorant and poverty stricken surroundings were about the child."

"But Lincoln rose from a lower depth than any of them, from a stagnant putrid pool; like the gas which set on fire by its own energy and self-cumbustible nature rises in jets blazing clear and bright."

"In childhood and youth his place of abode a squalid camp in a howling wilderness, his meal an ashen crust, his bed a pile of leaves, his nominal guardian a shiftless and worthless vagabond."

"Born not only in poverty, but surrounded by want and suffering; favored in nothing; wanting in everything which makes up the joys of life. .... It was literal truth that 'he had not where to lay his head'."

"It was miserable, desolate, cold (time of Lincoln's nativity) .... Not a piece of wood in the cabin, nothing with which to rekindle the fire ... Enlow searched everywhere in the cabin for a morsel of food, but the rough shelves were as bare as the walls ..."

"The character of that miserable dwelling—not much more than a hovel—was, however, in keeping with the unkempt, hungry-looking clearing which surrounded it."

Note—Sources have been purposely omitted but can be supplied if needed for verification.

### Documentary Citations

On December 12, 1808, Thomas Lincoln paid \$200 cash for the 300 acre farm on which Abraham Lincoln was born just two months later.

The Lincoln cabin was the same size as ninety percent of all the pioneer cabins built at that time.

A few months before the birthday of Abraham Lincoln his father was living in Elizabethtown and paying taxes on a log cabin and two house lots.

Abraham had a little sister two years older than he and she grew up to be an honorable young lady.

Both of Abraham Lincoln's parents were members of the Little Mount Church situated about three miles from their home.

In 1808 the Lincoln home received several additions to its supply of kitchen ware as is evident by the purchases of Thomas Lincoln.

When Abraham Lincoln was born his father owned at least 540 acres of land and possibly another tract of 250 acres and the house lots in Elizabethtown.

Lincoln's father received \$17.60 about the time of Abraham's birth for services performed in Elizabethtown.

In the year 1809 Thomas Lincoln entered two horses for taxes.

One month and three days after the birth of Abraham, Thomas Lincoln served as a jurymen at the county seat.

On November 15, 1808, Thomas Lincoln was in a law suit as plaintiff from which he recovered nearly twenty-five dollars.

In the years previous to Abraham's birth his father bought many items at one of the stores in Elizabethtown, which support the fact that he was a cabinet maker.

The farm on which the Lincolns lived at the time of Abraham's birth had the best spring of water in the whole countryside and the land was superior to that owned by most of Lincoln's neighbors.

Note—Copies of the original documents which support the above assertions may be found in "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood," by the editor of Lincoln Lore, and published by The Century Company of New York.



## TIMES WERE HARD ON NOLIN CREEK

**T**IMES are hard in this America of ours in these winter days of February, 1933. Men are jobless. Some of them have been jobless for more than three years. There are breadlines and shelters for the homeless. Millions of Americans are feeding and clothing and sheltering other millions of Americans.

Listen to the Cassandras of Congress and to our professional Jeremiahs and we must feel that no generation of Americans has ever been so menaced by hunger, cold, disease and death. They cry out as if poverty, want, hunger and hard times were unknown in America until these days of Depression.

America, over most of its history, has known hardship and want and even hunger somewhere in its vast areas. Times were always hard along the American frontier, measured by the softly luxurious standards of this age of motors, wireless, smooth pavements and talking-picture palaces.

Times were hard in 1809 along the South Fork of Nolin Creek, near Elizabethtown, in frontier Kentucky. Times were hard for everybody then, except a few planters in Virginia and the Carolinas, and some of the merchants and banker's of Philadelphia, Boston and New York.

Times were always hard for the Lincolns, who lived in that little hunter's hut, down in the creek bottoms of the "barren grass" country. No slum dweller in the drab hells of a modern city ever knew, or will ever know, harder days.

The Lincolns were unbelievably poor. Abraham Lincoln's mother was forced to pin her dress together with thorns. There was not much food. There were few clothes. There were not many shoes.

Abraham Lincoln was born on a Sunday morning 124 years ago today, in that hunter's hut

among the wild crabapple trees. It was a stormy morning. The snow sifted through the cabin walls. It melted on the hair of the mother as she rested with her baby on a bed of poles, covered with corn husks, with a worn bearskin for a blanket.

There was no welfare worker on the South Fork of Nolin Creek. There was no organized help or charity on all that long American frontier. People got along or they did not get along. They triumphed or they failed. It was on the anvils of adversity that Old America was forged and shaped.

Hard times again in 1816, out in the Buckhorn Valley in Indiana. Tom Lincoln had moved there when little Abraham was about seven years old. The nearest neighbor was a bear-hunter. The Lincolns lived in a "half-faced camp" set up in a tangle of trees, hazel thickets and wild grape vines. It was no more than a shed, unfit to shelter cattle. The roof was poles and bark. A log fire burned outside.

No bleak hovel in a mill district, no cabin in the coal country was ever more bleak than this open shed in the Indiana woods, where a little boy, destined to be President of the United States, slept on the ground in a bed of leaves, covered by a bearskin, through a winter long remembered for its cold and storms.

Little to eat on that Indiana frontier. Cows were few. Pork was scarce. No butter. No vegetables. No potatoes. Corn bread and wild game and wild nuts and fox grapes from the woods. There is hardly any poverty even in the depressed and weary winter of 1932-33 that can match the deep, hopeless and utter poverty of the Lincolns and their neighbors in 1816 to 1818.

They never did much better.

## 'One White Male' In Census of 1810 Rose to Heights

Early Listing Did Not Even  
Record First Name of  
Future President.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 12 (U.P.).

—The nation whose first official notice of Abraham Lincoln listed him in an 1810 census as "one white male under ten years of age" turned to his great marble tomb today to honor his 125th birthday anniversary.

The routine census phrase began official references which traced a career of the Civil war President who was born in a Kentucky log cabin. It listed four members of the Lincoln family, United Press research revealed. Abraham was not classified by name. His father, Thomas, was head of the family and lived in Hardin county, Ky. The census report listed him as "between the ages 26 and 45." Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother, also was listed according to the same age classification, while a daughter, Sarah, was listed as "female under ten years of age."

The ceremonies today were in observance of a birthday anniversary showing that Abraham Lincoln was actually one year old at the time of the 1810 census.

Among the mass of Lincoln data assembled in the town which he left to become President and in which he is buried was Lincoln's autobiographical sketch with the following history of his birth:

"I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in then Hardin county, Ky., at a point within the new county of Larue, a mile or a mile and a half from where Hodgen's Mill now is . . . it was on Hollin creek."

The Lincoln family had moved in 1808 to the farm on which Abraham was born.

Another time that Lincoln referred to his birth was when he himself wrote in the family Bible, a tradition of the pioneer families, the following:

"Abraham Lincoln, son of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, was born Feb. 12, 1809."



# LINCOLN LISTED ONE WHITE MALE

## Census Taken In 1810 Gives Facts About Historical Family

By DON CHAMBERLAIN

(United Press Staff Correspondent)

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The nation whose first official notice of Abraham Lincoln listed him in an 1810 census as "one white male under 10 years of age" turned to his great marble tomb today to honor his 125th birthday anniversary.

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The Lincoln family had moved in 1808 to the farm on which Abraham was born. Another time that Lincoln referred to his birth was when he himself wrote in the family Bible, a tradition of the pioneer families, the following: "Abraham Lincoln, son of Thomas & Nancy Lincoln, was born February 12, 1809."

64

# "Wat" Walters, 87, Is Hale and Hearty

## Seldom Comes to Town Except When on Business

Most people who see and talk to Walter "Wat" Walters say and believe that his ambition to live to be 90 years of age will be realized. Despite his 87 years he could pass for a man in his 60's. His mind is active, his sight and hearing are good and he walks at a sprightly gait that indicates good health and vitality.

Living with his son, J. L. Walters, on the south Dixie highway, he seldom comes to town except on business. He came to the Court House Tuesday to see about his old age pension.

"If it were not for my sweet nieces and children and my many old friends I would be a mighty lonely old man," Mr. Walters said. "I think love and friendship are the greatest things in the world. They are worth more than money, and I have been richly blessed with both."

"I was born October 6, 1849, five miles south of the Lincoln homestead and my grandmother, Sallie Friend, was the first person to lay hands on Abraham Lincoln. Doctors were scarce in those days and neighbors had to help each other.

"I was rocked in a Presbyterian cradle but I am a Baptist and a Democrat because I believe what they teach. I've been a member of the Baptist church for 60 years and have been an ordained deacon for 50 years.

"I have never used glasses. My sight and hearing are good and I have never owned a watch. The sun has always been my clock.

"I worked on the farm from the time I was nine years until I was 82. I haven't got much now but I put \$12,000 in Bill Montgomery's bank one time. He was a fine man. I never asked him for an accommodation but what I got it.

"I'm very fond of the Baptist preacher, Bro. Stovall. And he likes me. Every time we meet we hug each other like two brothers. He is a fine man.

"I have many old friends in

Hardin county. If it were not for your friends you wouldn't have much to live for. They are worth more than money."

All who know Mr. Walters, hope and trust he will live far past his goal of 90 years.

## POLE BRIDGE

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Rev. Edward P. Hall, who died recently in a Cincinnati hospital. He was thought to have had cancer of the stomach. He is survived by his wife, of Cincinnati, one son, Chestene Hall, also his mother, Mrs. J. A. Fryrear, of East View, two sisters, Mrs. Bertie Shelton, of Louisville, and Mrs. Lacy Jennings, of this place, also two uncles, N. P. and James M. Reed, of this place. George W. Reed attended the funeral.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Daugherty have returned from Chicago.

Lacy Jennings and son, Wilbur, were the Saturday night guests of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Whitworth and Toby Smothers.

It seems as though we are going to have a fine crop year in Hardin county and Kentucky, which we are all very proud to say after two real bad years. A letter received from Wisconsin states it is the first summer with good crops in sight for three years, and Kansas has had good rains, but as usual the grasshoppers are doing lots of damage there.

N. P. Reed and Dewey Skeeters were the Sunday morning guests of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Whitworth and Toby Smothers.



# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Number 409

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 8, 1937

## LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE FARM—"THE PRECISE LOCALITY"

When Abraham Lincoln prepared a brief sketch for the artist, Hicks on June 14, 1860, he wrote in referring to his birthplace, "I know no means of identifying the precise locality." It was not until the editor of Lincoln Lore made his documentary researches in Hardin County, Kentucky that the "precise locality" of the Lincoln farm was established by duly authorized court records.

When Richard J. Collier purchased what was known as the birthplace farm in 1905, he had no assurance but tradition and folklore that the land he acquired was once in possession of Thomas Lincoln, father of the President. One newspaper account of the Collier purchase stated that "Since the birth of Lincoln on February 12, 1809, the farm has changed hands only twice. Thomas Lincoln, the father of the President, sold the land to Richard Creal about the time the family moved to Indiana in 1816." Richard Creal did not acquire the part of the Lincoln farm where the cabin stood until August 26, 1867, fifty years after the Lincolns left Kentucky. By that time the cabin tract had changed hands eleven times. Creal added this tract to a hundred acre survey he had previously acquired and after some changes in the boundary sold 110½ acres to A. W. Dennett in 1894, specifying in the deed that it was the farm on which Abraham Lincoln was born.

When the United States came in possession of the traditional birthplace farm in 1816, there was no abstract of title available which proved that the farm was once in possession of Thomas Lincoln. In fact there were those primarily interested in the project who claimed that Lincoln lived on a squatter's domain so the boundaries of any specific piece of ground surrounding the cabin were of no importance.

But Abraham Lincoln was not born on a squatter's domain. His father paid two hundred dollars "cash in hand" for a 300 acre tract on which the birthplace cabin stood. The document showing Thomas Lincoln's ownership of the land is to be found in the Hardin County Circuit Court records, a copy of which follows with the endorsements of David Vance and Isaac Bush:

### MATHER TO VANCE—BOND

"Articles of agreement made this First Day of May, 1805 between Richard Mather of the County of Hardin, and State of Kentucky, and David Vance of the County and State aforesaid witnesseth that I have sold to the

said David Vance a certain parcel or tract of land on the waters of the South Fork of Nolin containing 300 acres beginning near or at a spring called the Sinking Spring, to be twice as long as wide and including as much of a grove called the Little Turkey Grove, as will fall within the boundary as aforesaid and I do obligate myself to make a deed with a general warranty to the said David Vance when the said David Vance has made full payment to

Signed: Isaac Bush; witness, Sam Haycraft."

It was not long after Thomas Lincoln acquired the land that it was in litigation over payments Vance had failed to make to Mather. The court decreed Thomas Lincoln should receive from William Bush the \$200.00 he had paid for the land, and he moved from the premises in 1811. This tract originally in possession of Thomas Lincoln was surveyed by order of the court in 1837, and was found to contain 348½ acres instead of the designated 300. The boundaries follow:

"Beginning at a large white oak (1) 13 poles above the sinking or rock spring, running thence to a North 9½ degrees West 155 poles to a stake (2) in John Taylor's field, thence South 89½ degrees East 155 poles to a forked black jack (3), thence South 9½ degrees East 310 poles to a black jack (4), thence North 89½ degrees West 155 poles to the beginning."

The above survey was divided into several smaller tracts including one of nine acres surrounding the Lincoln cabin, which at the time designated has been in possession of the following property holders since it was first patented as part of a 30,000 acre survey:

William Geenough, February 20, 1786; John Dewhurst, June 15, 1786; William Weymouth, October 15, 1791; Joseph James, June 11, 1798; Richard Mather, December 23, 1802; David Vance, May 1, 1805; Isaac Bush, November 2, 1805; Thomas Lincoln, December 12, 1808; Benjamin Wright, Comm'r., September 12, 1816; Gabriel Kirkpatrick, December 19, 1816; John Welsh and William Duckworth, December 19, 1816; George Burkhart, July 16, 1822; Henry Thomas, January 28, 1824; John Gash, October 14, 1830; Henry Brothers, April 7, 1835; Charles F. Huss, March 25, 1840; William Huss and William J. Thomas, February 15, 1845; Henry D. Horn, September 27, 1852; R. P. Hankla, December 14, 1853; Richard Creal, August 26, 1867; Alfred W. Dennett, November 23, 1894; L. B. Hanley, Comm'r., May, 1905; R. J. Collier, August 28, 1905; Lincoln Farm Ass'n., November 9, 1907; United States of America, April 11, 1916.

The titles to the other tracts cut out of the original Thomas Lincoln 348½ acre survey have been traced through the court records so that we may say that there is now, documentary proof for what we may call "the precise location" of the Lincoln Birthplace Farm.



BIRTHPLACE FARM

X—Site of Birthplace cabin.

1.—Beginning corner of four farms.

Numerals—Four corners of 348½ acre survey.  
Road—Old Cumberland Road, Louisville to Nashville.

Shaded Portion—Tract of 110½ acres now in possession of the United States Government.

Richard Mather or his order for the aforesaid land, in witness whereof we have inter-changeably set our hands the day and year above written. Signed Richard Mather. Witnesses: John Gum, Shepherd Gum."

Endorsement. No. 1. "For value received I assign the within agreement to Isaac Bush, given under my hand and seal this 2nd Day of November, 1805. Signed David Vance. Witnesses: Ben Helm, John Miller."

Endorsement. No. 2. "For Value received I assign the within article to Thomas Lincoln. Witness my hand and seal the 12th Day of December, 1808.

# Your Child

By GARRY C. MYERS, Ph.D.

## First Days of the Baby Abe Lincoln

Dennis Hanks, a nine-year-old boy, was the first, besides the parents, to hold Baby Abe Lincoln. Dennis was an adopted boy, taking on the family name, Sparrow.

One hundred thirty-two years ago, early on Sunday morning, Feb. 12, Tom Lincoln walked to the Sparrow home, two miles away, and told them, "Nancy's got a baby." Dennis raced down to the Lincoln cabin. Next day Dennis asked if he might hold the baby. The mother told him as she put the tiny creature into his arms, "Be keerful, Dennis, fur you air the first boy he's ever seen." And, as told by Carl Sandburg (Harcourt Brace & Co., N. Y., 1926):

"Dennis swung the baby back and forth and kept up a chatter about how tickled he was to have a new cousin to play with. The baby screwed up the muscles of its face and began crying with no let-up.

"Dennis turned to Betsy Sparrow, handed her the baby and said to her, 'Aunt, take him. He'll never come to much.'"

### Interest in Books

When Baby Lincoln began creeping his floor was the bare ground. I wonder if his mother had trouble keeping him from eating dirt as do some modern mothers who live in a house with floors. There is no record that Abe was an eating problem or that he ever had temper tantrums.

Dennis Hanks has handed down some information about Abe's interest in books when Abe was about 14. "Abe used to say: 'The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is a man who'll git me a book I ain't read.'"

John Hanks, who worked in the fields with adolescent Abe Lincoln, said: "When Abe and I came back to the house from work, he used to go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of corn bread, sit down, take a book, cock his legs up high as his head, and read. Whenever at work, or at the house, he would stop and read."

Sandburg relates: "He liked to explain to other people what he was getting from books; explaining an idea to some one else made it clearer to him. The habit was growing in him of reading aloud. When he studied books his lower lip stuck out, for which he was banded. This habit remained with him."

From Lincoln's own writings we have the following, of great significance to parents and adolescent students:

"I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea, until I had caught it. I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over again, until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought for any boy I knew to comprehend."

Lincoln also said that among his earliest and happiest memories was that of his mother reading folk tales to him. Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress and the Bible are among the books he read over and over again—one explanation of his forceful simple style of speech and writing.

A selected list of good books for youths to read may be had without cost by writing me in care of this paper, enclosing a self-addressed envelope with a three-cent stamp on it.

Tomorrow: The Boy Lincoln



# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 670

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 9, 1942

## THAT NATAL DAY

Every approaching birthday of Abraham Lincoln calls attention to the incidents associated with his nativity. It is not strange that through the years there has accumulated much traditional information relating to the parental home and its environment on that natal day. Folklore has cluttered up the premises to the extent that the actual conditions under which the family was living when their illustrious son was born, has been almost obscured.

Nearly every phase of Lincoln's early life has been in controversy and no question was so hotly contested for several years as the actual location of Lincoln's birthplace. Now an author of a recent book has challenged the accuracy of 1809 as the year of Lincoln's birth, but any one today who questions either the place of Lincoln's birth or the date of his birth, is likely so blinded by the spirit of provincialism or prejudice that it would do little good to display before him documents or duly authorized records as place or time exhibits. The fact that Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, near the Cave Spring, three miles south of where the town of Hodgenville, Kentucky, now stands, is no longer in dispute.

There are some other traditions relating to the natal day, reviewed year by year as historical facts, which are positive barriers to a better understanding of the child's infancy.

### *The Omens*

One author in telling the story of Lincoln's nativity has placed special emphasis upon a severe blizzard which he claims was raging in the Lincoln country on the very day when Abraham was born. The impression one gets from reading the story is that nature was disturbed by the birth of this infant who is said to have come "on the wings of the storm." Research has disclosed that there was no such storm on February 12, 1809, as the author alleged and that there were no other unusual phenomena in either the terrestrial or the celestial spheres on the day of Lincoln's birth.

### *The Hovel*

It is not enough to have Abraham Lincoln born in a log cabin, but tradition is supposed to have discovered that his first home was a pile of logs or sticks little better than a hovel and no better than a stable. One of the early biographers of the President used a picture of an old tumbled down shanty situated on an alley in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, as the birthplace of the President. Even now this picture is often displayed as the place where Lincoln was born. The presence of any old dilapidated, unoccupied log cabin in the section of Kentucky where the President first saw the light of day would usually be associated with the birthplace of Lincoln.

### *The Mutilated Cabin*

No one who visits the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln near Hodgenville, Kentucky, gets a true picture of the home in which Abraham Lincoln was born by viewing the restored cabin now exhibited there. While the logs may have been in the original Lincoln home, inasmuch as the size of the rebuilt cabin was cut down in both width and length in order that it might fit into the building constructed to receive it, there is a feeling that the Lincoln home was far inferior to the other cabin homes in the community. The actual Lincoln log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born was a typical log cabin for that day and time.

### *Son of a Freeholder*

Not until very recent years has there been made available positive evidence that the cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born stood on land owned by his father. Early stories about the nativity claimed that Thomas Lincoln was a squatter and did not own the land on which his cabin was built. Thomas Lincoln paid \$200.00 in cash in November, 1808, for a farm consisting of 340 acres, however, less than 100 acres of this tract comprises what is now pointed out to the visitor as the original birthplace farm.

### *Naming the Baby*

Early biographers claim that the President was named for a fifteen-year-old boy who happened to be passing the Lincoln cabin at the time of the infant's birth and was sent to bring a midwife to the home. The story as originally told, is but another piece of folklore, as it is well known that the baby was named for his grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, who was massacred in the month of May, 1786. There has been and still is an attempt to link some one of four different Abraham Enlows, name of boy in question, with the destiny of Abraham Lincoln.

### *Big Sister*

No picture of the Lincoln cabin home in Kentucky at the time of Abraham Lincoln's birth can be correctly visualized without observing the presence of another child but two years old, a girl named Sarah, the first child of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln. Her presence implies that the coming of Abraham Lincoln, the first boy, must have brought much pleasure to the parents as well as the little sister. We are also to conclude that there might not be lacking such infant clothes as would be necessary for the occasion, and most certainly there would not be the same measure of anxiety in the mind of the mother as had been experienced two years before, when Sarah was born at Elizabethtown.

### *Traditional First Visitor*

Dennis Hanks constantly claimed that he was the first person outside the immediate family who saw the baby Abraham Lincoln, but Dennis Hanks was hopelessly confused about the nativity of Abraham Lincoln and was never just certain where Abraham Lincoln was born until advised by some of the Hanks relatives. In Dennis' interview with Herndon he claimed Abe was born on Knob Creek which was about eight miles from his own home, yet he ran all the way over to the cabin to see the new-born babe. There were many babies related to Dennis born in the community where he lived and it is foolish to presume that fifty-six years after the birth of Abraham had occurred that he, a nine-year-old boy at the time, would remember any details whatever about that particular baby.

### *The Nativity Cartoon*

Probably there has never been a version of the nativity of Abraham Lincoln which draws a more correct picture of the natal day on February 12, 1809, than that famous cartoon which shows some of Thomas Lincoln's neighbors inquiring of one another about any news that there might be in the community, when one man offers the information that there was a new baby out at Tom Lincoln's. The comment brought forth the statement that "Nothing ever happens here," and it is not likely that anyone, not even those in the Lincoln cabin home, changed to any great extent, the routine of their usual pioneer life. Probably Abraham Lincoln's own parents on that natal day in 1809 thought of their own offspring as just another addition to the family.



# Where WAS Lincoln Born?

Washington, March 6 1848

Mr. Solomon Lincoln

Dear Sir,

Your letter to Mr. Hale, in which you ask me the kind of making some kind enquiries concerning me, has been handed me by Mr. Hale, with the request that I should give you the same information. I was born Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> 1809 in Hardin county, Kentucky. My father's name is Thomas; my grandfather, <sup>was</sup> Abraham, the son of my own. My grandfather Rockingham county in Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1780, and was killed by the Indians.

"... my grandfather's name was Abraham— He had, as I think I have heard, four brothers, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas and John— He had three sons, Mordecai, Josiah and Thomas, the last, my father— My uncle Mordecai had three sons, Abraham, James and Mordecai. Uncle Josiah had several daughters and an only son, Thomas— My father has an only child, myself, of course—"

Thus, on March 24, 1848, did a 37-year-old Congressman from the unruly border State of Illinois, in his own angular handwriting, determine the legitimacy of his ancestry in advance of the question raised 12 years later during the heat of the campaign from which he was to emerge as President Abraham Lincoln.

"I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin county, Kentucky— My father's name is Thomas..."

Three weeks earlier he then had disposed of the question of his place of birth, also to be clouded in campaign doubt a dozen years in the future.

Abraham Lincoln, from a photograph taken at about the time he wrote the two letters above. The letters, in the Rosenbach collection, are regarded as two of the most important Lincoln ever wrote regarding his ancestry.

Washington, March 24- 1848

Mr. Solomon Lincoln

Dear Sir,

Your of the 21<sup>st</sup> is received— I shall not be able to answer you interrogatories very fully, I will, however, as the best I can. I have mentioned that my grandfather's name was Abraham— He had, as I think I have heard, four brothers, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas, and John— He had three sons, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, the last, my father— My uncle Mordecai had three sons, Abraham, James and Mordecai. Uncle Josiah had several daughters and an only son, Thomas—





## BORN IN CABIN

But neither campaign mudslingers nor later iconoclasts ever disputed that when he was born 135 years ago today, it was in a log cabin!

Lincoln was serving his only term in Congress when he wrote the letters. As dispenser of Federal patronage for the 500,000 citizens of Illinois he was, perhaps, a somewhat more important figure than the run-of-the-mill freshman Representative, but not yet was he so far above the common run of folk that his ancestry was questioned and the legitimacy of his birth maligned.

The letters were written to an amateur New England genealogist, Solomon Lincoln—perhaps a very distant relative. In the possession of the Rosenbach Company, 1618 Locust st., they answered an inquiry turned over to Lincoln by his colleague, Congressman Artemus Hale, of Massachusetts. It was not a case of doing a constituent a favor, for Hale's wife, formerly Deborah Lincoln, was distantly related to the sinewy politician from Illinois.

### FIRST LETTER

The first letter, dated at Washington March 6, 1848, follows in full:

"Your letter to Mr. Hale, in

which you do me the honor of making some kind inquiries concerning me, has been handed me by Mr. Hale, with the request that I should give you the desired information—I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin county, Kentucky—My father's name is Thomas; my grandfather's was Abraham—the same as my own—My grandfather went from Rockingham county in Virginia, to Kentucky, about the year 1782; and, two years afterwards, was killed by the Indians—We have a vague tradition, that my great-grandfather went from Pennsylvania to Virginia, and that he was a quaker (sic)—Further back than this I have never heard anything—It may do no harm to say that 'Abraham' and 'Mordecai' are common names in our family; while the name 'Levi' so common among the Lincolns of New England, I have not known in any instance among us.

"Owing to my father being left an orphan at the age of 6 years, in poverty, and in a new country, he became a wholly uneducated man; which I suppose is the reason why I know so little of our family history—I believe I can say nothing more that would at all interest you—If you shall be able to trace any connection between yourself and

me, or, in fact, whether you shall or not, I should be pleased to have a line from you at any time—"

### MORE INQUIRIES

Solomon Lincoln answered the young Congressman and made some specific inquiries that brought a prompt reply on March 24, 1848, also from Washington. That text follows in full:

"Yours of the 21st is received—I shall not be able to answer your interrogations very fully; I will, however, do the best I can—I have mentioned that my grandfather's name was Abraham—He had, as I think I have heard, four brothers, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas, and John—He had three sons, Mordecai, Josiah,

and Thomas, the last, my father—My uncle Mordecai, had three sons, Abraham, James and Mordecai. Uncle Josiah had several daughters, and an only son, Thomas—My father has an only child, myself, of course—

"This is all I know certainly on the subject of names; it is, however, my father's understanding that, Abraham, Mordecai, and Thomas are old family names of ours—The reason I did not mention Thomas as a family name in my other letter was because it is so very common a name, as to prove but little, if any thing, in the way of identification—

### KIN IN VIRGINIA

"Since I wrote you, it has occurred to me to enquire of

Gov. McDowell, who represents the district in Virginia, including Rockingham, whether he knew persons of our name there—He informs he does; though none very intimately except one, an old man by the christian (sic) name of David—That he is of our family, I have no doubt—I now address him a letter, making such inquiries as suggest themselves; and, when I shall receive an answer, I will communicate to you, anything that may seem pertinent to your object—"

The letters were written on a bluish-gray quarto paper, watermarked "Jessups." Each covers the full first page and is carried over a few lines on the second. Both are signed with the "A. Lincoln" that was to become famous as the signature of one of the country's most maligned and best-loved Presidents. According to Percy E. Lawler, of the Rosenbach staff, they are two of the most important letters Lincoln ever wrote about his ancestry.

Genealogists such as Solomon Lincoln learned far more about the President's ancestry than he ever knew. The great-grandfather, who, according to "vague tradition . . . went from Pennsylvania to Virginia," was John, and the place he went from was a brownstone house, perhaps whitewashed then as now, down a dirt road off the Ridge pike (Route 422) about a mile and a half west of Baumstown, Berks county.

John was the son of Mordecai, who came to Pennsylvania from Monmouth county, N. J., and who may have other descendants among Jersey woodsmen. The first American Lincoln, Mordecai's grandfather, was Samuel, who settled in Hingham, Mass., in 1637 as an emigrant from England.

Four earlier generations have been traced in England.

DR. WILL S. HODGEN  
DENTIST  
P. O. BOX 557  
LEBANON, KY.

2-8-1949.

Rev. Louis A. Warren,  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Sir;—

I can not recall whether I ever wrote you  
about this matter?

The photo enclosed has explanation of  
what it is written on back. You can  
read this letter with aid of magnifying  
glass.

A Miss La Rue of Virginia let me have  
the letter years ago and I had a  
photograph made of it after getting  
it straightened out. From this I  
had a photostat made which is  
four times as large and can  
be read easily without magnifying  
glass.

Would it be of value to go in the  
Research Foundation collection? If so I  
shall be glad to send you a copy  
free of expense.

I am in my 76 year, and am a  
great-great grandson of Robt. Hodgen (1742-1812)

Please return letter with answer.  
Respt. Will. S. Hodgen





February 15, 1949

Dr. Will S. Hodgen  
P. O. Box 557  
Lebanon, Kentucky

Dear Dr. Hodgen:

This is to advise you that Dr. Warren is out of the office at present on an extended speaking itinerary. He will not return here until sometime after the middle of March.

Consequently, I am holding the letter and photograph pending his return. If you would like the letter and photograph returned immediately, kindly advise.

Very truly yours,

mm

Secretary to Dr. Warren



March 23, 1949

Dr. Will S. Hodgen  
P. O. Box 557  
Lebanon, Kentucky

My dear Dr. Hodgen:

I am just back from a long speaking itinerary and find your letter and copy of the interesting document you enclosed on my desk.

I am happy indeed to have a copy of this letter and as your permission seems to be granted in the letter you wrote I have had a photostat made from it so that it will not necessitate your sending another copy.

I am very happy indeed to have a letter from you also because of your relationship to the pioneer, Robert Hodgen.

I am taking occasion to send under separate cover copies of Lincoln Lore which I think you might be interested in reading. Please accept them with my compliments.

*Returned photostat of letter 3/28/49* Very truly yours,

LAW:JM  
L.A. Warren

Director

5  
12/1  
49

Dr. Louis A. Warren,  
c/o The Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren:—

Your letter of May 18th. in answer  
to mine of May 16th. received.

The only things I have received of  
you is the copies of "Lincoln Lore" and  
the small photo letter of Mary Brooks  
La Rue with written data on back of  
it in regard to her connection at  
birth of Lincoln, the one I sent to you.

If you had a photograph or a photo-  
stat made of it, you should have the  
negative or positive from which you  
could have any number of prints made.

Did you have it enlarged or made  
same size? a photograph or photostat?

Did you have the writing on back  
of small photo photographed?

I am sending you in a tube under separate  
cover a photostat of that letter. Let me hear from you  
further.

Will S. Hodgen.



May 25, 1949

Dr. Will S. Hodgen  
Post Office Box No. 557  
Lebanon, Kentucky

Dear Doctor Hodgen:

I think possibly now your letter of explanation allows me to straighten out my own inability to follow through with the interesting photograph of the Mary Brooks LaRue letter, which I had intended to return, but also to sent along a photostat with it.

Now you have placed me under added obligation to you by forwarding another photostat, and I shall have this copied and one returned so I may somewhat compensate for the opportunity of seeing the original.

I did not copy from the back of the letter the statement thereon, which I should like very much to have, and it will not be too much trouble, just a pencil copy of the wording will be sufficient.

Thank you very much for the opportunity of seeing this letter.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

Honoured Mother and Brother

Harden County Nolinn Settlement Kentucky January

I have taken up my pen to write to you in order to discover to you <sup>both</sup> the sentiments of my own heart, As to my Family's health and welfare thanks to God I have <sup>no</sup> reason to complain. But my mind is somewhat uneasy and solicitous about the welfare of my first Children, - As the Legates have agreed to give in all they have received of my Father in Law's Estate, - And I am utterly at a loss myself in going in any proper way for my first Husband. John Sauls Receiver of said Estate And as I am confident that the Legates are sitting to give in the property for my Children as themselves

I therefore humbly solicit you both not to let any accounts be passed against the said Children, unless, be such as the Children have a right to answer to I have wish for my Children to get any thing of said Estate but what they have a legal right to and that I am anxious for them to obtain

Whom could my first Children confide in sooner than in their Grand Mother and Uncle who were privy to all the gifts of property that my Husband John Sauls Received I therefore hope you will see them righted there, as their Guardian my last Husband will see them righted here Rebecca Sauls, Squire Sauls, Hebe Sauls & Peggy Sauls my Children desires to be remembered to their Grandmother and to all their Relations in there, And that God may preserve you and yours is the sincere wish of

Your ever affectionate and Loving

Daughter and Sister

Mary Enlow



DR. WILL S. HODGEN  
P. O. BOX 557  
LEBANON, KY.

6  
3  
49.

Dr. L.A. Warren, Director,  
The Lincoln National Life Foundation,  
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren:-

your letter of May 25th. enclosing photostat,  
and printed letter made from same re-  
ceived. As I have several, I offered you  
in my first letter, It will not be nec-  
essary for you to send me any more.  
Thank you very much for these.

Below is copy of writing on back of the photo  
letter I sent you first. If I can be of further  
service call on me. Sincerely  
Will. S. Hodgen.

a copy of a letter written by Mary Brooks  
La Rue - Enlow, widow of John La Rue, to her  
mother-in-law, Phoebe La Rue, Sr., and  
her brother-in-law James La Rue, January  
30th. 1798. According to tradition her eyes  
were the first to see, and her hands to first to han-  
dle the baby body of the immortal Abraham Lincoln.

See pages 158 and 84 of "Six Generations of La-  
Rues and Allied Families", by Judge Otis M. Mather of  
Hodgenville, Ky.

Will. S. Hodgen,  
Lebanon, Ky. Aug. 15/1934.

# HOW TO KEEP WELL

BY DR. T. R. VAN DELLEN



## Primitive Births Successful.

IT WAS 142 YEARS ago today that Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky, under the same insani-  
tary conditions that the greater  
part of the human race had come  
into the world up to that time.  
This is not so remarkable consid-  
ering that childbirth is a natural  
phenomenon.

The Lineolns were living on the  
Sinking Spring farm, four miles  
from Hodgenville in Hardin Coun-  
ty. They owned poultry and live-  
stock and their log cabin lacked  
luxuries but was not uncomfort-  
able. Lincoln's father had consult-  
ed a Dr. Daniel B. Potter on sev-  
eral occasions but called the local  
midwife to attend the confinement.  
After all, midwifery was popular  
in those days and the country

doctors were not too enthusiastic  
about obstetries because it kept  
them out of contact with their  
homes and other patients for many  
hours and sometimes days.

There is no exact record of who  
was present in the log cabin except  
that neighbors and relatives usual-  
ly helped on such occasions. They  
kept the fire going, made the  
necessary hot water and prepared  
to care for the new comer. With  
the help of these women and their  
crude obstetrical instruments, one  
of our most famous Presidents  
came into the world.

★ ★ ★

**FOLKLORE ALSO HAS** it that  
a neighbor, Isom Enlow, saved the  
life of baby Abraham. This man  
"happened by" and noticed that

the infant's face was blue with  
cold. He rubbed the baby with his  
hands and poured some melted  
turkey fat, which he carried to oil  
his gun, into the baby's mouth.  
This should make modern mothers  
shudder.

Lineola's birth is not unusual  
considering the era. Most deliv-  
eries took place at home because  
hospitals were few and far be-  
tween. Even though one were  
available, the home was preferred  
because of convenience and the  
fact that there was less danger  
of developing childbed (puerperal)  
fever. However, the mortality rate  
was high because little could be  
done if the birth deviated from  
normal. The midwife was in no  
position to cope with hemorrhage  
or hasten delivery if labor was  
prolonged or difficult.

2-12-51



# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1237

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 22, 1952

## LINCOLN NATIVITY LEGENDS

Folklore and tradition have so greatly influenced the stories associated with the birth of Abraham Lincoln that they have become known as the Lincoln Nativity Legends. The reported incidents relating to the infant's natal day and his surroundings have been so greatly misrepresented and exaggerated that even the humble Bethlehem stable scene presents more attractive living conditions. Sources gathered by two authors are primarily responsible for the circulation of the absurd conclusions still being published about Lincoln's birth. William Herndon's recorded interviews with Dennis Hanks and Roger Gore's presentation of Austin Gollaher's reminiscences present the nucleus for much of the legendary data.

Herndon, one of Lincoln's law partners, whose pronouncements have been so widely repudiated in recent years by modern historians, draws a distorted picture of the family group augmented by the addition of a male child on February 12, 1809. He states in the preface of his book that Abraham came from a "stagnant putrid, pool," alleging that both the child and his mother were illegitimate and the putative father a worthless vagabond.

No student of reputation today would question the fact that Abraham was the second child and first son among the three children born to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Nevertheless there is reluctance on the part of most modern writers to eliminate entirely the legendary atmosphere of Lincoln's ancestral heritage. They still cling to the old Herndon buggy ride story in which the junior partner claimed Mr. Lincoln himself mentioned that his maternal grandfather was unknown. Yet, with only the doubtful reminiscence of Herndon to affirm this alleged statement authors completely ignore the testimonials of the kinswomen of Lucy Shipley Hanks, grandmother of the President, who refuted the charge.

Documentary evidence in abundance has forever destroyed the sordid character sketch of Abraham Lincoln's father which was so widely disseminated by the unreliable Herndon. Thomas Lincoln is looked upon today as a worthy hard working pioneer whose economic status compared favorably with other frontiersmen of the Kentucky years. Abraham Lincoln did not begin life in the environment of worthless characters but in — borrowing a term once used by an author in derision — "a frugal Christian home."

Dennis Hanks, Herndon's informant about incidents occurring on the day of the nativity, by his own testimony is disqualified as a witness. He thought Abraham was born at the Knob Creek cabin of the Lincolns where Thomas, Abraham's younger brother, was born. At one time, apparently, Dennis did not know that Abraham was born in the log cabin by the Sinking Spring. Furthermore, there were other children being born in the cabin home of his mother's sister, Polly Hanks Friend, about the same time as Nancy Hanks Lincoln's three children came into the world. Trying to recall the incidents which took place at the time of any one of the half dozen children, after a period of fifty years had elapsed, would be quite a task where a series of births occurred in the same community at about the same time. If Eleanor Atkinson had not interviewed Dennis Hanks and composed a delightfully written book based on the interview, the famous nativity scene originating with Dennis would probably have been forgotten. At one time the editor of *Lincoln Lore* more or less accepted the nativity recital by Dennis, impressively related in the Atkinson book.

When Nicolay and Hay, President Lincoln's secretaries, wrote their monumental *History of Abraham Lincoln*, they were apparently influenced by the earlier nativity legends then in circulation. They concluded that, "In the midst of the most unpromising circumstances that ever witnessed the advent of a hero into this world, Abraham Lincoln was born."

Roger Gore, a one time resident of Hodgenville, Kentucky, has contributed largely to the nativity legend which features the wretched physical surroundings which were supposed to be prevalent when Abraham Lincoln first saw the light of day. He describes a frightful snowstorm which was sweeping over the country and reached the height of its fury on February 12, leaving the impression that the child came on "the wings of the blizzard". He introduces a neighbor who was caught in the storm and who found temporary shelter in the Lincoln home. The unexpected visitor discovered the mother and the new born babe with the "imprint of death" upon its face. The cabin was "miserable, desolate, cold," there was no fuel or food available and the father was away from home.

The reminiscences of Austin Gollaher which are supposed to have served as source material for the nativity scene just portrayed are as valueless as much of Dennis Hanks' memories. We have positive evidence that the Gollaher family whom Gore claims went to the rescue of Mrs. Lincoln on that winter's day did not arrive in Hardin County, Kentucky until three years after Abraham Lincoln was born, and it is also established that there was no snow storm on that second Sunday in February, as alleged.

Yet in face of all this dramatic build-up, Webster, the cartoonist, possibly has given us the most accurate immediate local reaction to the birth of Abraham Lincoln when he portrays two settlers meeting in the vicinity of the Lincoln home. The man from the village inquires, "What' new out here neighbor?" to which the local pioneer replied: "Nuthin' a tall, nuthin' a tall, 'cept fer a new baby down t' Tom Lincoln's, nuthin' ever happens out here."

There is still a tendency, however, to cling to some of the legendary aspects of the place where Abraham Lincoln was born. Even the most recent Lincoln biography presents Abraham's birthplace as a "backwoods cabin". The author admits that the Knob Creek home occupied two years later by the Lincolns was located on the much travelled Louisville to Nashville highway where "pioneers with rumbling waggons . . . pedlars who brought wares from the outside world . . . now and then a coffle of slaves trudging behind a mounted overseer or slave trader" presented an "eager restless cavalcade" which passed before the door of the Knob Creek cabin. This same old Louisville, Nashville road as then located passed directly by the birthplace cabin, situated at the foot of a hill right beside a famous spring, a natural stopping place for travelers. Abraham never lived on a backwoods road in Kentucky.

The objective approach in history has done much to invalidate the folklore element which at one time predominated in the stories referring to the birth of Lincoln. The cabin in which Lincoln was born was not inferior to thousands of similar log cabins located in Kentucky in the year 1809. Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence supporting the average economic status of the Lincolns, and the respectability of the father and mother. One by one the legends which have made Abraham Lincoln almost a folklore character are observed from the objective view point and the historical rather than the traditional portrait is sure to prevail.



## FEB. 12—ON NOLIN CREEK—

# 'Ye Can Come In Tom; It's A Boy'

BY DICKSON PRESTON  
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

At noon on Feb. 11, 1809, young Abraham Enlow rode his horse along a raw dirt road in Hardin County, Kentucky. He was on his way to Kirkpatrick's Mill, and under his saddle was a sack of corn for meal.

Abe Enlow, at 15, was a big boy, already beginning to regard himself as a man. He was thinking what fun he'd have, that Saturday afternoon, standing around the mill swapping yarns while the dull stones slowly ground the corn.

And he was thinking, too, of the hoe cake his mother would bake when he got back home.

This was barren land through which he was traveling, and it didn't raise much. It had few trees and was covered with little except coarse brown grass. It had been burned over too many times by Indians trying to make a grazing ground for buffalo.

But there was a line of willows and dogwoods along the south fork of Nolin Creek half mile away. And there were two or three oaks, one of them pretty good-sized, down by the sinking spring. That brought to mind the new folks who'd moved in the round-log cabin on the hillock just above the spring.

Abe knew these people were named Lincoln, or Linkhorn as his family said it. He had heard Tom Lincoln's father was killed by Indians. He knew they had a daughter, just turned two, and that Mrs. Lincoln was expecting another child.

As he neared the cabin, he saw a man walking toward him, a square-build, compact man of about 30 with coarse black hair and swarthy skin.

"Reckon ye'd better go back an' fetch yer mother," Tom Lincoln said. "Look's like Nancy's time has come."

ELSEWHERE IN THE United States, that February week-end, it was a time of crisis. In Boston, New England merchants were angrily demanding secession from the union.

"The South and West are ruining us," they cried. "President Jefferson is a traitor. Unless our fleets are returned to the seas, New England will quit the United States."

The lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, with the prophetic name of Levi Lincoln, pondered a prophetic speech:

"Union is everything," Lincoln told the Legislature about that time. "It is our strength, our numbers, our resources . . . Are we ready to proclaim to a suffering and enslaved world that unhappy man has made his last despairing effort for a free government? That the most promising experiment has so soon failed?"

### Elephant Displayed

In Cincinnati, it was a week-end of excitement. The only living elephant in the United States was on show at the home of Griffin Yeatman—admission 25 cents. In Frankfort, Ky., there was a rumor that the British had burned Savannah; and in New York the talk was of the new stagecoach which could take people to Philadelphia in less than a day and a half.

Washington City, the capital, was anticipating two things: the start, on Monday, of debate on a bill to let merchant ships defend themselves; and the coming

inauguration on March 4 of James Madison as Jefferson's hand-picked successor. The Federalist Party seemed dead for all time.

### Slaves For Sale

There were slaves advertised for sale in the New York Post as well as in Southern cities. And there was a \$30 reward up in Kentucky for one Willis, "a Negro man . . . about 25 or 26 years of age, yellow complexion . . . who had escaped to Marietta on the Ohio River, and "was freed by a Methodist preacher."

In Shrewsbury, England, that same Sunday, a boy was born to Robert and Susannah Darwin. They named him Charles. And at Stratford in Westmoreland County, Va., a two-year-old by the name of Robert E. Lee toddled happily.

IF NOLIN CREEK knew or cared about any of this, it has not been recorded.

Abe Enlow left his sack of corn with Tom Lincoln and galloped home to get his mother. She was Mrs. Mary La Rue Enlow, locally famed as a "granny woman" (midwife). She rode the two miles on the horse behind him, while Abe's married 20-year-old half sister, Peggy Walters, followed on foot.

At the Lincoln cabin, Mrs. Enlow and Mrs. Walters quickly took charge.

"Thar's work to be done," Mary Enlow said to Tom. "You git up some firewood. She shook her head at Peggy. Both of them knew what women in their country had to go through and live—as many of them didn't.

### A Terrible Life

Young Abe Enlow took up his sack of corn and went on his way. Tom Lincoln cut wood, took care of his horse and cow—and then had time to think.

It was a terrible life for Nancy on these ornery acres, he knew that. Yet he hadn't been able to make a living as a carpenter. There was so little money in sight that every man had to do his own tinkering.



Pore? It seemed like everybody was pore, but the Lincolns was porest of all. Still, Nancy wasn't the pestering kind; she hadn't nagged him about it. Maybe one of these days they'd go off to better land somewhere.

Sometime after midnight—early on Sunday, Feb. 12—one of the women swung open the rude door on its leather hinges and said to him:

"Ye kin come in now, Tom; it's a boy."

Inside, Nancy Hanks Lincoln lay on a bed of poles. Her dark hair spilled over the bearskin cover and her small gray eyes were blank with pain. Her slender body was spent, her high forehead and pronounced cheekbones more gaunt than ever. But she smiled a tired smile at Tom as he bent to look at the child.

**'CALL HIM ABRAHAM'**

"We'll call him Abraham," she whispered, "after your father."

Nancy and he both knew only too well they couldn't name him after her father. For her mother, Lucy Hanks, hadn't been married until long after Nancy was born. Later, Nancy would tell her son of this and say he had "just as good Virginny blood in him as George Washington" from his unknown grandfather.

And he was to say of her, long after her death from "milk sick"

on a lonely Indiana hillside, "God bless my mother; all that I am or ever hope to be I owe to her."

\* \* \*

**EARLY THAT SUNDAY** morning, while she slept, Tom went two miles to the cabin of Nancy's foster sister, Betsy Sparrow.

"Nancy's got a baby boy," he said in his slow-talking way.

Little Dennis Hanks, the Sparrows' nine-year-old adopted son, couldn't wait to hear the rest. "Babies," as he said later, "wasn't as common as blackberries in the woods of Kaintuck. I cut an' run the hull two miles to see my new cousin."

Pretty soon Betsy Sparrow got there too. She washed the baby and put a yaller flannel petticoat on him. Then she cooked some dried berries and wild honey for Nancy and slicked up the cabin.

"Kin I hold 'im?" Dennis asked.

"Shore," Nancy said. "His name is Abe. But be keerful, Dennis, fur you air the fust boy he's ever seen."

Dennis looked into the tiny face, like red cherry pulp squeezed dry. Quickly he handed the baby to Betsy Sparrow.

"Shucks," said Dennis, "he'll never come to much."

But that night, just the same, the boy rolled up in a b'arskin and slept by the fire so he could see the little feller some more, when Tom Lincoln had to get up to tend him.

And young Abraham Lincoln cried, and slept, and ate, and started to grow.

## Lincoln's First Meal on Turkey Gease

Abraham Lincoln's first meal consisted of turkey grease soup, nothing more.

One story surrounding the birth of the 16th President tells how, as a new baby, he was saved from death by a neighbor seeking refuge from a blizzard.

The winter of 1809 is said to have been extremely cold in Kentucky. February 11 and 12 were bleak blizzard days and the snow had drifted so badly experienced woodsmen became bewildered in the Kentucky forest.

One native of the Central Kentucky area, half dead from cold and shock, stumbled about noon into a little log cabin not far from Hodgenville. Soon the man realized he was in Tom Lincoln's home and the coals in the fireplace were only slightly glowing. Hearing a groan from the corner he turned and saw Nancy Lincoln and her daughter Sarah in bed. Mrs. Lincoln asked the man not to worry about them but to see about her new boy baby at the foot of the bed on the tick of straw. Examining the baby, the man found him discolored by the severe cold and near starvation.

Back into the fury of the storm he went to get wood for the fire. After getting the cabin warm, he started looking for food but there was not a scrap in the house. Knowing the baby and Mrs. Lincoln must have something to eat, he made a soup from turkey grease he was carrying to keep the rifles of his gun clean.

Mrs. Lincoln and Sara drank the soup and the boy baby, later named Abraham, got his share

through a piece of twine, one end in his mouth and the other end in the soup.

A cabin, said to be the one in which this experience as related by J. Rogers Gore in his book, "Boyhood of Abraham Lincoln," happened, is enshrined today in a

beautiful pink granite building located south of Hodgenville on the farm where the 16th President was born. Many other interesting Lincoln relics can be seen in Kentucky, the land of Lincoln's birth and early childhood.



# Lincoln's Birth Covered With Fanciful 'Memories'

WASHINGTON — Abraham Lincoln observed his 56th and final birthday Feb. 12, 1865. The war and his life were passing swiftly into time's memory.

The Civil War ended in the stillness of Appomattox on April 9. President Lincoln was fatally shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. the night of the 14th. The next morning he was dead.

"On his death," Carl Sandburg wrote in the National Geographic, "the casket with his body was carried north and west a thousand miles; and the American people wept as never before; bells sobbed; cities wore crepe; people stood in tears and with hats off as the railroad car paused in the leading cities of the seven states, ending its journey at Springfield, Ill. the home town."

## "Never Come to Much"

The facts of Lincoln's birth on Feb. 12, 1809, lie buried in the rich loam of legend. Decades after the event in a dirt-floor cabin in Kentucky, neighbors and relatives "remembered." The saga grew. Looking on the wrinkled, newborn baby, a 9-year-old cousin had supposedly remarked, "He'll never come to much."

As President Lincoln's last birthday drew near, he was broodingly concerned with charitable ways to reunite Americans and "bind up the nation's wounds." He had just returned from a discouraging peace mission to Hampton Roads, Virginia, in the collapsing Confederacy.

On Feb. 5, he called the Cabinet together to read his draft of a document for Congress consideration as a joint resolution. It stated in part: "That war will cease and armies be reduced to a basis of peace; that all political offenses will be pardoned; that all property, except for slaves, liable to confiscation or forfeiture, will be released therefrom." The cabinet disapproved his magnanimity. The draft was never sent.

The day before his last birthday, Lincoln attended to routine matters. He permitted an interview by a Rhode Island journalist; heard out an Illinois man

seeking aid for the Society of Friends and helped Mrs. Lincoln welcome guests to an afternoon reception attended by General and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant.

History records no special observance at all on his birthday. He usually had breakfast with Mrs. Lincoln at 9 a.m., then went to his office at 9:30. That day he consulted with a District of Columbia judge, and received a visit from a Connecticut Senator.

## "With Malice Toward None"


Lincoln's second inauguration was, of course, just around the corner. On March 4, he took the oath of office at the Capitol after making his memorable address with its classic benediction: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

Forty-one days later, on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, the day of the assassination, the President sat in his office talking to a friend.

"Everything is bright this morning," he said. "The war is over . . . We are going to have good times now, and a united country."

FEB 11 1967

# Ripley's Believe It Or Not



**THE HOMES**  
of the Chinantec Indians  
of Mexico,  
BECAUSE OF THE RAVAGES  
OF TERMITES, MUST BE  
REBUILT EVERY YEAR

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**  
• WAS THE FIRST  
U.S. PRESIDENT  
• BORN OUTSIDE THE  
ORIGINAL 13 STATES •

**THE PRAYING  
MANTIS**  
IS THE ONLY INSECT  
THAT CAN TURN ITS  
HEAD LIKE A MAN

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50 Chatham Road Rt.3  
Harwich Center, Mass. 02645  
Jan. 25, 1983.

Mrs. Mary Jane Hubler  
Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library  
Fort Wayne, Ind. 46801

Dear Mrs. Hubler-

Thankyou for the copies of the Bibliography and of Lincoln Lore. I shall be interested in the response of the class of Seniors when I distribute them! In that same connection, if the following are available. I could use them:

- Little Known Boyhood Adventures of Abraham Lincoln
- Xerox copies ✓ -Lincoln Highlights in Indiana
- Lincoln Statues in Bronze
- Beardless Portraits of Abraham Lincoln
- ✓ -Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers
- Abraham Lincoln Interprets the Constitution
- Abraham Lincoln A Concise Biography
- Lincoln and the Riddle of Death(Bruce)
- Your latest Library and Museum Brochure or Folder

If I am asking too much, just say, "Enough!" I will understand-the trouble is that when I have an opportunity to tell of the great work done by the LNLF, I can't resist!

Two years ago(Feb.25,1981) you wrote to me concerning one of my bizarre requests - the exact time of Lincoln's birth. Recently, I came across the item which prompted my inquiry re the clock in the Oklahoma Territorial (State) Legislature, and so I thought that you might like to have it for your files (one of those interesting, but not important, items).

Guthrie, Oklahoma, Feb.12, 1909

The Lower House of the Legislature had voted, Feb. 11, to ignore observance of Lincoln's birthday. Near noon, Rep. Jones said, pointing to an electric clock on the wall, "That clock, after counting time without interruption ever since this body has been in session, has stopped at the hour of 11 o'clock."

"One hundred years ago, Abraham Lincoln<sup>was</sup> born, as history runs, at the exact moment at which this clock has stopped. In stopping work this clock is showing far greater respect for Lincoln's memory than is this body. I move we adjourn until tomorrow morning."

The motion carried without a dissenting voice. The Senate remained in session.

Illinois State Register, Feb.13, 1909.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth A. Bernard

TIME OF BIRTH

If the Register is handy, you might wish to check for exactness. The note was taken in a hurry!

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Rob Kabacoff PhD

# Inter-Links Perpetual Calendar

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February 1809						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

To view any month, enter the date

, and

- [Back to Today](#)

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*Back to the [Reference Shelf](#).*



# LINCOLN NOT BORN IN HARDIN COUNTY

Investigation Shows Popular Belief  
as to Birthplace Is  
Erroneous.

## COURT RECORDS FOUND OF MARRIAGE OF PARENTS

Minister's Return Puts the Mar-  
riage Date at June 12,  
1806.

Washington, February 9.—[Special]—  
The people of the United States believe  
that Abraham Lincoln was born in a  
little log cabin in Hardin, now Larue,  
county, Kentucky, February 12, 1809. A  
thorough investigation of all the evidence  
establishes with absolute certainty, so far  
as any fact can be established to the sat-  
isfaction of the historian, that the place  
agreed upon as the birthplace of Mr. Lin-  
coln, the spot towards which millions of  
Americans are turning their thoughts in  
this centennial year of the birth of the  
great war president, was never seen by  
him until he had reached the age of one  
or two years.

Mr. Lincoln always believed he first saw  
the light in a log cabin in Hardin (now  
Larue) county, Kentucky. There is no  
fact better established than that Thomas  
Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married  
on the 12th of June, 1806, by Rev. Jesse  
Head, of the Methodist Church, and that  
the marriage took place in the house of  
Richard Berry, on Beech Fork, Washing-  
ton county, Ky.

### Washington County's Claim.

For it is Washington county that claims  
the honor of being the birthplace of Abra-  
ham Lincoln, and the claim seems to be  
thoroughly established. The fact that the  
record of the marriage of Mr. Lincoln's  
parents has been found in the clerk's  
office in Washington county is only pre-  
sumptive evidence that they were residing  
there two years later, when Abraham was  
born. It is a historical fact that they re-  
moved to Hardin county about two years  
later, when Abraham was a very small  
boy. That he believed he was born in  
Hardin is shown by a note he wrote to  
an artist who came to Washington to  
paint his picture during the war, in which  
he stated he was born in Hardin.

That Mr. Lincoln believed also that his  
parents were married in Hardin is evi-  
denced by the fact that in 1862 he wrote  
to Mr. Samuel Hayeraft, a citizen of that  
county, asking him to make a transcript  
of the record of the marriage of Thomas Lin-  
coln and Nancy Hanks and send it to  
him. Mr. Hayeraft searched the county  
records very carefully, but was unable  
to gain any trace of the marriage, and  
so wrote Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln never  
replied to the letter. Mr. Hayeraft died  
some years ago, at an advanced age. He  
frequently told persons now living of hav-  
ing received the letter from Mr. Lincoln.

### Vindicated Cousin's Good Name.

The discovery of the exact spot on  
which Lincoln was born was brought  
about in a romantic manner. The first  
biography of Mr. Lincoln was written  
by an Illinois soldier, Col. Ward H. La-  
mon. In this book the unqualified state-  
ment was made that the parents of Mr.

Lincoln were never legally married. The  
book fell into the hands of Mr. R. M.  
Thompson, of Washington county, whose  
mother was a cousin of Nancy Hanks.  
He had often heard his mother speak in  
highest terms of the mother of Mr. Lin-  
coln, and he was convinced that the bi-  
ographer had fallen into error in asserting  
that she and Thomas Lincoln were never  
married. He made a thorough search of  
the records of Larue county, but could  
not find any record of a marriage. It  
occurred to him that the marriage might  
have been performed in Washington coun-  
ty, where he knew the Lincolns resided  
for sometime.

Aided by W. F. Booker, the county  
clerk, who, at a venerable age, still holds  
the office, Mr. Thompson began searching  
through the Washington records. It was  
a heavy task, as the records for many  
decades had been bundled together by  
years and stored away in the cellar of  
the clerk's office. Mr. Thompson instituted  
a search for persons in the county who  
might know anything about the marriage,  
and found several who told him that it  
occurred in the summer of 1806. Mr.  
William Hardesty, one of the most highly  
respected citizens of the county, was one  
of those who recalled the marriage, and  
said he was present when the ceremony  
was performed.

### Marriage Certificate Found.

With the year fixed it was an easy  
matter to find the clerk's record of the  
marriage. In a bundle of musty papers  
containing the county records for 1806  
Mr. Thompson and Mr. Booker came  
across the marriage bond and the certifi-  
cate of the officiating minister. The  
bond, which was required under the law  
of Kentucky at that time, reads as fol-  
lows:

"Know all men by these presents that  
we, Thomas Lincoln and Richard Berry,  
are held and firmly bound unto His Ex-  
cellency the Governor of Kentucky, in  
the just and full sum of £50, current  
money, to the payment of which, well  
and truly to be made to the said Gov-  
ernor and his successors, we bind our-  
selves, our heirs, etc., jointly and sever-  
ally, firmly by these presents, sealed with  
our seals and dated this 10th day of June,  
1806. The condition of the above bond is  
such that, whereas, there is a marriage  
shortly intended between Thomas Lin-  
coln and Nancy Hanks, for which a  
license has been issued. Now, if there  
be no lawful cause to obstruct the said  
marriage, then this obligation to be void,  
else to remain in full force and virtue in  
law."

The return of the marriage by Rev.  
Jesse Head is contained in a list of mar-  
riages which he certifies to the clerk of

the county that he performed April 28,  
1806, and September 25 of that year.  
After giving the names of several couples  
whom he had united in wedlock, the  
minister gives these:

"June 12, 1806, Thomas Lincoln and  
Nancy Hanks."

### Truth Travels With Leadon Feet.

It is nothing short of astounding that  
there should still be people who sincerely  
believe that the parents of Abraham Lin-  
coln were never married. That there are  
such only goes to establish the fact that  
error flies on the wings of the wind to  
the four corners of the earth, while truth  
travels with leadon feet.

But the absolute proof of the fact that  
the marriage between Thomas Lincoln  
and Nancy Hanks was legally performed  
in Washington county does not prove  
that Mr. Lincoln was born in that county.  
For this dependence must be placed upon  
the word of good men and women who  
knew Thomas and Nancy Lincoln and  
were intimate enough with them to know  
of the birth of the various children.

Here again Mr. Thompson availed him-  
self of the memory of Mr. William Har-  
desty, who attended the marriage, and  
who knew Thomas Lincoln and his wife  
well, until their removal from the coun-  
ty. Mr. Hardesty made affidavit that the  
first child born to the couple in the Berry  
house on Beech Fork, where they were  
married, was a girl named Nannie, who  
died. Some years ago a sunken grave, evi-  
dently that of a child, was found near  
the site of the old cabin. Near the grave  
was a rough gravestone of native lime-  
stone, on which were carved the letters,  
"N. L." Nancy Lincoln, named for her  
mother.

The second child, said Mr. Hardesty,  
was a boy, and was named Abraham. He,  
also, was born in the single-room loghouse  
on Beech Fork, Washington county. In-  
deed, there are still living in the com-  
munity people with unquestioned reputa-  
tion for truthfulness, who are ready to  
swear they have heard old people tell of  
the birth of Abraham Lincoln in the lit-  
tle cabin on Beech Fork.

"Abi Linnick was born on a small  
tributary of Rolling Fork River, called  
Kings Creek."

Wm. Hanks in manuscript (1884)

99  
86  
17





